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LOST.

LOOKING over the *Times*' advertisements, one's eye often catches such as the following:—'Lost, a Youth' (while ships and schools exist, not so very mysterious); 'Missing, an Elderly Gentleman' (who has apparently walked quietly off to his City-office one morning, and never been heard of more).—Or merely, 'Left his Home, John So-and-So,' who, after more or less entreaties to return thereto, may have the pleasure of seeing, by succeeding advertisements of 'Reward Offered,' whether he is valued by his disconsolate kindred at ten, fifteen, or fifty pounds. Other 'bits' there are, at which we feel it cruel to smile: one, for instance, which appeared for months on the first day of the month, saying: 'If you are not at home by' such a date, 'I shall have left England in search of you;' and proceeding to explain that he or she had left orders for that periodical advertisement; giving also addresses of banker, &c., in case of the other's coming home meantime; all with a curious business-like, and yet pathetic providence against all chances, which rarely springs from any source save one.

All newspaper readers must have noticed in mysterious accidents or murders, what numbers of people are sure to come forward in hopes of identifying the unknown 'body.' In a late case, when a young woman was found brutally shot in a wood, it was remarkable how many came from all parts of the country to view the corpse—persons who had missing relatives bearing the same initials as those on the victim's linen—parents with a daughter gone to service, and then entirely lost sight of—friends with a friend gone to meet her husband, and embark for Australia, but who had never embarked or been heard of again; and so on; all seeking some clue to a mournful mystery, which may remain such to this day, for the dead woman turned out to belong to none of them.

But these things suggest the grave reflection—what a number of people there must be in the world who are, not figuratively or poetically, but literally, 'lost;' who by some means or other, accident, intention, carelessness, misfortune, or crime, have slipped out of the home circle, or the wider round of friendship or acquaintanceship, and never reappeared more; whose place has gradually been filled up; whose very memory is almost forgotten, and against whose name and date of birth in the family Bible—if they ever had a family and a Bible—stands neither the brief momentous annotation 'Married,' &c., nor the still briefer, and often much safer and happier inscription, 'Died'—nothing

save the ominous, pathetic blank, which only the unveiled secrets of the Last Day will ever fill up.

In the present times, when everybody is running to and fro—when, instead of the rule, it is quite the exception to meet with any man who has not navigated at least half of the globe—when almost every large family has one or more of its members scattered in one or two quarters of the civilised or uncivilised world—cases such as these must occur often. Indeed, nearly every person's knowledge or experience could furnish some. What a list it would make!—worse, if possible, than the terrible 'List of Killed and Wounded' which dims and blinds many an uninterested eye; or the 'List of Passengers and Crew,' after an ocean-shipwreck, where common sense forebodes that 'missing' must necessarily imply death—how, God knows!—yet sure and speedy death. But in this unwritten list of 'lost,' death is a certainty never to be attained—not even when such certainty would be almost as blessed as life, or happy return—or more so.

For in these cases, the 'lost' are not alone to be considered. By that strange dispensation of Providence which often makes the most reckless the most lovable, and the most froward the most beloved, it rarely happens that the most Cain-like vagabond that wanders over the face of the earth, has not some human being who cares for him—in greater or less degree, yet still cares for him. Nor, abjuring this view of the subject, can we take the strictly practical side of it, without perceiving that it is next to impossible for any human being so completely to isolate himself from his species, that his life or death shall not affect any other human being in any possible way.

Doubtless, many persuade themselves of this fact, through bravado or misanthropy, or the thoughtless selfishness which a wandering life almost invariably induces. They maintain the doctrine which—when a man has been tossed up and down the world, in India, America, Australia, in all sorts of circumstances and among all sorts of people—he is naturally prone to believe the one great truth of life: 'Every man for himself, and God for us all.' But it is not a truth; it is a lie. Where every man lives only for himself, it is—not God—but the devil—for us all.

It is worth while, in thinking of those who are thus voluntarily 'lost,' to suggest this fact to the great tide of our emigrating youth, who go—and God speed them if they go honestly—to make in a new country the bread they cannot find here. In all the changes of work and scene, many are prone gradually to forget—some to believe themselves forgotten—home fades away in distance—letters get fewer and fewer. The wanderer begins to feel himself a waif and stray. Like

Dickens's poor Jo, he has got into a habit of being 'chivied and chivied,' and kept 'moving on;' till he has learned to feel no particular tie or interest in anybody or anything, and therefore concludes nobody can have any tie or interest in him. So he just writes home by rare accident, when he happens to remember it—or never writes at all—vanishes slowly from everybody's reach, or drops suddenly out of the world; nobody knows how, or when, or where; nor ever can know, till the earth and sea give up their dead—

But long they looked, and feared, and wept,
Within his distant home,
And dreamed, and started as they slept,
For joy that he was come.

Alas, how many a household, how many a heart, has borne that utterly irremediable and interminable anguish, worse far than the anguish over a grave, which Wordsworth has faintly indicated in *The Affliction of Margaret*:

Where art thou, my beloved son?
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh, find me—prosperous or undone!
Or if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest, and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Betwixt the living and the dead,
For surely then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

It may seem a painfully small and practical lesson to draw from an agony so unspeakable; but surely it cannot be too strongly impressed upon our wandering youth, who go to earn their living across the seas—in the Australian bush, or the Canadian forests, or the greater wildernesses of foreign cities, east and west: that they ought everywhere and under all available circumstances, to endeavour to leave a clue whereby their friends may hear of them, living or dead. That if, always, it is the duty of a solitary man or woman, while living, so to arrange affairs that his or her death shall cause least pain or trouble to any one else; surely this is tenfold the duty of those who go abroad: that whatever happens, they may be to those that love them, only the dead, never the 'lost.'

Sometimes under this category come persons of a totally different fate—and yet the same—whose true history is rarely found out till it is ended, and perhaps not then. People who have sprung up, nobody knows how, who have nobody belonging to them—neither ancestors nor descendants—though as soon as they are gone, hundreds are wildly eager to make themselves out to be either or both. Of such is a case now pending, well known in the west of Scotland, where the 'next of kin' to an almost fabulous amount of property is advertised for by government, once in seven years; and where scores of Scotch cousins, indefinitely removed, periodically turn up, and spend hundreds of pounds in proving, or failing to prove—for all have failed hitherto—their relationship to the 'dear deceased.' This was an old gentleman in India, who neither there nor in his native Scotland had a single soul belonging to him, or caring to 'call cousins' with

him; who, indeed, had never been heard of till he died, worth a million or so, leaving all the wealth he had laboured to amass—to Nobody. Truly the poor solitary nabob may be put among the melancholy record of those 'lost,' whose names have been long erased, or were never writ, on the only tablet worth anything in this world—the register of friendship, kindred, home.

Similar instances of fortunes, greater or less, 'going a-begging' for want of heirs, are common enough—commoner than people have the least idea of. Government annually pockets—very honestly, and after long search and patient waiting—a considerable sum, composed of unclaimed bank dividends, and real and personal property of all kinds, the heir or heirs to which it is impossible to find. Among these, the amount of dead sailors' pay is said to be a remarkable item—thousands of pounds, being wages due, thus yearly lapsing to government, because all the ingenuity of the harbour-master, into whose hands the money is required to be paid, cannot find any relative of poor departed 'Bill' or 'Jack'—whose place of birth has likely been never heard of—who has gone under so many aliases that even his right surname is scarcely discoverable, and often has lived, died, and been buried as simple 'Jack' or 'Bill,' without any surname at all.

This indifference to an hereditary patronymic is a curious characteristic of all wanderers of the lower class. Soldiers, sailors, and navvies engaged abroad, will often be found to have gone by half-a-dozen different surnames, or to have let the original name be varied *ad libitum*, as from Donald to McDonald, and back again to Donaldson, possibly ending as O'Donnell, or plain Don. Frequently, in engaging themselves, they will give any new name that comes uppermost—Smith, Brown, Jones: or will change names with a 'mate'—after the German fashion of ratifying the closest bond of friendship—thereby producing inextricable confusion, should they chance to die, leaving anything to be inherited.

Otherwise—of course it matters not. They just drop out of life, nameless and unnoticed, of no more account than a pebble dropped into the deep sea; and yet every one of them must have had a father and a mother, may have had brothers and sisters, might have had wives and children, and all the close links of home. Much as we pity those who lose all these—the bonds, duties, and cares which, however heavy sometimes, are a man's greatest safeguard and strength, without which he is but a rootless tree, a dead log drifted about on the waters—still more may we pity those, in all ranks and positions of life, who are thus 'lost.' Not in any discreditable sense, perhaps from no individual fault; but that fatal 'conjunction of circumstances,' far easier to blame than to overcome—possibly from being 'too easy,' 'too good,' 'nobody's enemy but their own.' Still, by some means or other—God help them—they have let themselves drop out of the chain of consecutive existence, like a bead dropped off a string, and are 'lost.'

Equally so, are some, of whom few of us are so happy as never to have counted any—whom the American poet Bryant, already quoted, touchingly characterises as 'the living lost.' Not the fallen, the guilty, or even the prodigal, so hopelessly degraded that only at the gates of the grave and from one Father can he look for that restoration, to grant which, 'while he was yet afar off, his Father saw him.'

Not these, but others who bear no outward sign of their condition; whom the world calls fortunate, happy, righteous—and so they may be towards many, yet to a few, familiar with their deepest hearts, knowing all they were and might have been, still be irrevocably, hopelessly, 'the living lost.' Lost as utterly as if the grave had swallowed them up, mourned as bitterly as one mourneth for those that depart to return no more.

Everybody owns some of these; kindred, whom prosperity has taught that 'bluid' is not 'thicker than water;' friends who have long ceased to share anything of friendship but the name—perhaps even not that; lovers who meet accidentally as strangers; brothers and sisters who pass one another in the street with averted faces—the same faces which 'cuddled' cosily up to the same mother's breast. These things are sad—sad and strange; so strange, that we hardly believe them in youth, at least not as possible to happen to us; and yet they do happen, and we are obliged to bear them. Obligated to endure losses worse than death, and never seem as if we had lost anything—smilingly to take the credit of possessions that we know are ours no longer—or quietly to close accounts, pay an honourable dividend, cheat nobody, and sit down, honest beggars—but 'tis over! Most of us—as at the end of the year we are prone, morally as well as arithmetically, to calculate our havings and spendings, and strike the balance of our property—are also prone—and it may be good for us too—to linger a little over the one brief item, 'Lost.'

But in all good lives, even as in all well-balanced, prudent ledgers, this item is far less heavy, in the sum-total, than at first appears. Ay, though therein we have to count year by year, deaths many, partings many, infidelities and estrangements not a few. Though, if by good-fortune or good providence, we be not ourselves among the list of the lost, we have no guarantee against being numbered among that of the losers.

The most united family may have to count among its members one 'black sheep,' pitied or blamed, by a few lingeringly, hopelessly, sorrowfully loved; coming back at intervals, generally to everybody's consternation and pain: at last never coming back any more. The faithfulest of friends may come one day to clasp his friend's hand, look in his friend's face—and find there something altogether new and strange, which he shrinks from as from some unholy spirit which has entered and possessed itself of the familiar form. The fondest and best of mothers may live to miss, silently and tearlessly, from her Christmas-table, some one child whom she knows, and knows that all her other children know, is more welcome in absence than in presence, whom to have laid sinless in a baby's coffin, and buried years ago, would have been as nothing—nothing.

Yet all these things must be, and we must pass through them, that in the mysterious working of evil with good, our souls may come out purified as with fire. The comfort is that in the total account of gains and losses, every honest and tender soul will find out, soon or late, that the irremediable catalogue of the latter is, we repeat, far lighter than at first seems.

For, who are the 'lost?' Not the dead, who 'rest from their labours,' and with whom to die is often to be eternally beloved and remembered. Not the far-away, who, especially at the grand festival-time, are as close to every faithful heart as if their faces laughed at the Christmas-board, and their warm grasp wished all 'a happy new-year.' Never, under all circumstances that unkind fate can mesh together, under all partings that death can make, need those fear to be either lost or losers who, in the words of our English prayer-book, can pray together that 'amidst all the chances and changes of this mortal life, our hearts may surely

there be fixed where true joys are to be found.' Where, whatever may be the 'tongues of men or of angels' that we shall have learned to speak with, then, we may be quite sure that there shall be in it no such word as 'lost.'

WATCHING THE CLOCK.

I AM myself Yorkshire all over, but my late lamented father had the misfortune to be one-half Oxon, and it is to that circumstance, doubtless, that the public is indebted for the following interesting relation: no Yorkshireman would have given an opportunity for the thing to have occurred. I preface the incident thus abruptly, from a desire to extenuate in some measure at the outset my dear parent's viridity and trustfulness in the matter; I feel so entirely ashamed of the dear departed, when I remember how he was taken in, that I have no patience to tell the story as it should be told. I remember reading in a certain book a tale of a woman in Arabia, or some other very distant unknown country, following her dead son's body to the grave, and ejaculating to the poor lad's glory and honour: 'He never, never, never told a lie;' and so in our county we are accustomed to congratulate ourselves upon our relatives, deceased or otherwise, never having been duped or 'done' by their fellow-creatures. Every people, I suppose, has some particular virtue which it exaggerates, and sets especial store by; in Arabia, as it seems, it is truth, while with us in Yorkshire it is not so much that as 'cuteness.' 'We mayn't be clever, but partial friends do say we are "downy,"' is the modest motto of many hundreds of my countrymen; but it can never be that of our house, alas! after the misfortune which occurred to the late head of it, over whose remains, whatever filial remark I might have uttered, it would have been mere blind flattery to have said: 'He never, never, never was taken in.' He was most utterly taken in and despoiled of both money and reputation, and that—ah me that his son should have to write it—even by Londoners.

We reside in a country village not many miles from York itself; which being surrounded with suitable lands, and possessing many equine advantages, the whole business of the place has long been that of breeding and training race-horses. Every decent house in it except our own is a trainer's, every barn and cart-house has been metamorphosed into stables and loose boxes. From the mossy mounting-stone at one end of Little Studdington, to the water-trough with its running stream at the other, we are altogether of the horse, horsey. A village of Yahoos where man is of no consequence as compared with the quadruped; where the horse is kept cleaner and warmer, is better housed and better fed, is more pampered when he is well and more cared for when he is ill, than are any of those whom we call (sarcastically) our poorer brethren; and all this occurs not so much, I fear, through misdirected benevolence, as because there is a great deal more money to be got by the equine than the human. Of course the Studdingtonians are as sharp as sharp can be. Racing-stables are, as it were, forcing-houses for the particular sort of mental activity to which I have already alluded, so that our very infants—certainly our five-year-olds—are precociously and preternaturally 'Yorkshire.' For low cunning and sleepless suspicion, I would back our jockey-boys against all the Bevis Marks attorneys in the kingdom. In the way of turf-business, they would do their own fathers—if they happened to have a personal knowledge of that relative, which is not, however, generally the case—as soon as look at them; nor have I observed many symptoms of that honour about them, which is said to exist among a certain less legalised but scarcely more reputable fraternity. They have no trainers, poor

lads; and as for their owners, these have but few morals to make a present of, I fear, or even to keep for themselves. I have heard that there is a large class of American persons upon the other side of the Atlantic who pride themselves upon being 'smart' and 'sprit', and tolerably exempt from the trammels of conscientious principle. I wish sincerely—if they have any dollars—that these gentry would come across to Little Studdington, and try their luck with us: as my poor father used to observe, when any strangers paid us a visit, they would have to put both hands to keep their hats on their heads, I reckon, and then we should pick their pockets. The governor himself was quite unfit to live in such a place as this, and still more to keep an inn in it; and that he knew. But he had come to Little Studdington when it was inhabited not by horses, but by human beings, and these Yorkshire, indeed, but far from being turfites. A trout stream skirted our lawn before 'The Angler's Rest,' and his customers here were for the most part fishermen: easy-going, kind-hearted gentry, who were pleased with their clean and comfortable lodging, and valued their host very highly; hospitable folks, who would often ask him to dine with them in the little low-roofed parlour upon the captives to their rod and landing-net, and to crack a bottle with them out of his own cellar; respectable people, who, if they stayed over the Sunday, would go to the old gray church quite naturally, as though they did it every week at home, and very different from Mr Clifney Bity, the only trainer amongst us who has any religion at all, and who goes once a year upon the Sunday before the St Leger, in hopes—the sinner!—to get a pull upon his rivals by that superstitious device. My poor father never made but one bet in his life, and that one was the cause of his misfortune.

About ten years ago, the grand national and provincial steeple-chases took place at York, and attracted vast quantities of fine folks: there were a great number of entries for the principal stake; and several of the worst horses were, contrary to custom, permitted to run for it, instead of being 'scratched' by their owners the night before the race. York could not literally hold all its sporting visitors; and three very gentleman-like and well-dressed strangers came even so far as Little Studdington, and put up at 'The Angler's Rest.' They went into town, and returned from it every day in our four-wheel during the week; and when the races were over, they were so enamoured of the snug little house and its capital accommodation, that they remained with us a fortnight, eating and drinking of the best, and always delighted to see the old gentleman at their dinner-table. I think I can see my respected parent now, as he was wont to sit upon the extreme edge of his well-polished chair, in rapt astonishment at their fashionable conversation. If they happened to mention an absent friend under the rank of a baronet, it was in a sort of apologetic tone—their connections being so exclusively aristocratic. Good society was my poor father's weakness; and never having been familiar with the turf himself, his sense of the excellences of our nobility was quite overwhelming. The three friends were wont to play at cards after dinner for pretty large sums; and the game which seemed best to suit their elegant but eccentric taste was that of triangular cribbage. My father was a capital hand at this, and easily perceived that they were but indifferent performers; but they never dreamed of asking him to cut in, although one or other of them would often request his advice at an important crisis.

Cautious, indeed, as the governor naturally was, it must be confessed that his fingers itched to hold a hand against these folks who, as often as not, neglected to peg 'one for his heels,' or 'two for his nob,' but

his respect for their exalted condition always deterred him from expressing his wishes. Often and often did my poor father lament, after his misfortune, that he never had had a chance with the cards; but my belief is, that had he ventured upon such a thing, these unskilful gentry would have very rapidly improved in their play, and would have won his shirt off his back if they had played long enough.

One afternoon, when they had dined as usual, early, and before the cards were produced, their conversation turned upon wagers: how Lord Clickclack had won ten thousand pounds by being dumb for a day; how the Duke of Oxfordshire had backed himself to walk from Pall-mall to Bond Street on a levee morning, without opening his eyes; and of the ingenious device of his antagonist, the Marquis of Luxall, in driving over him in a Hansom cab until he did so; with many other anecdotes of the aristocracy not included in the collection of Mr Burke.

'This sort of thing is much harder than it appears to be,' observed one of the three gentlemen. 'Now, I will lay ten pounds that no man keeps himself in one position and counts the ticks of that great clock, for instance, for a whole hour.'

'How do you mean?' exclaimed my father, greatly interested.

'Why, that no man can sit in a chair—your chair, for instance—facing the clock, and wag his head from right to left as Old Time with the scythe yonder is wagging, for the space of an hour, and never say any words but "Here she comes, and there she goes," as the clock says.'

'You bet ten pounds that I don't do that?' cried the governor.

'Not with you,' replied the other coolly; 'I don't want to win your money, my good man. I will bet either of my two friends that they do not do it.'

'Nay,' said one of them, 'tis easy enough; but I would not bother myself with such a thing for twice the money. I don't see,' added he, 'why you should not give our good Boniface a chance, either.'

'Do, pray, do,' cried my father, who was perhaps the most stolid man in the world, and could have sat six hours doing anything he was told to do without any inconvenience. 'I'll bet you.'

So, rather against his will, as it seemed, he who had proposed the conditions agreed to make the wager.

My father was then placed in his chair immediately opposite the clock; the stakes on either side were placed upon the table within his view; he was warned that every means would be resorted to short of laying hands upon him to induce him to look away, or say anything besides the words agreed upon; and as the clock struck four, the old gentleman's head had begun to wag, 'Here she comes, and there she goes,' and 'Here she comes, and there she goes,' very slowly and solemnly, keeping time with the pendulum.

'He'll lose,' cried one of the gentlemen.

'Certain to lose,' replied another laughing. 'Hallo, old chap, there goes your window-pane!'

There was a crash of breaking glass, that made the governor wince again, but he did not alter his position a hairbreadth, or desist one quarter of a tick from his monotonous task. Some of the particular china which then ornamented our oaken shelves next came down with a run; but its owner's face only turned a little pale, as he thought what stepmother would say about it. 'Here she comes, and there she goes,' was all it drew from him.

His antagonist seemed now to have given up the destructive plan as a failure.

'I say, Boniface,' cried he, 'I am going to put the stakes in my pocket—I am; and suiting the action to the word, he swept off the two ten-pound notes into his waistcoat before the governor's eyes.

A shadow of anxiety flitted for an instant across my

parent's brow, but 'Here she comes, and there she goes,' was all that torture itself would at that time have wrung from him. Ten minutes of the terrible ordeal had already passed.

'Boniface,' observed the sporting gentleman with feeling, 'we must now part. My friends and myself have passed a pleasant time at Little Studdington, but our visit is now at an end. One of us has just gone out to order the four-wheel; and by rapid driving, we shall just catch the express train to London. In anticipation of this position of affairs, our little articles are already packed and ready to be placed under the seat. Receive, my dear sir, the assurances of our consideration. I wish that we had anything else to offer you in return for your very genial hospitality; this ten-pound note of yours will remind us, be assured, of your kindness, until the day when it shall be spent. I would that the terms of our little wager permitted us to shake you by the hand. Unlucky it is, too, that we start from the back-door, so that you will be unable, of course, to see the very last of us. In forty minutes about, you will be released from this irksome task, and we ourselves shall be at York, Boniface. Heaven bless you. What! not a word at parting?'

'Here she comes, and there she goes,' cried the governor stoutly, but suffused with a cold perspiration.

'Yes, here she comes,' repeated the sporting gentleman derisively, as the sound of wheels made itself to be distinctly heard from the back; 'and there she will go in about a minute: she is a fast mare.'

He closed the door, and the governor was left alone with the broken window, and the smashed china, and the infernal pendulum, repeating his prescribed formula with the utmost constancy, but with an anxious expression of countenance.

To him presently entered my maternal step-parent, who is of a suspicious temperament. 'Whatever have you been about, John, to let them chaps go away without any one to drive Polly, and at such a pace as— Goodness gracious, the china! What has happened? Rachel, Betty, Dick,' screamed she, 'what has come to your poor father? Do but look at him! Speak to us, John.'

'Here she comes, and there she goes,' murmured the governor sadly, and awaying himself slowly from side to side like a mandarin.

I shall never forget the scene as long as I live: I laughed until I could stand up no longer, and then I lay down on the floor and laughed there. The indignation that was thrown into the old gentleman's tones as he pursued his terrible task, only made the matter ten times more ridiculous.

'He is mad, stark staring mad,' cried my step-mother, as she laid her hand upon his shoulder.

'Here she comes, and there she goes,' exclaimed my father irascibly, as with one well-directed blow of his elbow he tumbled the old lady upon the floor.

Then I really thought he had gone mad, and went to get a rope to tie his arms; only the foam flew from his lips—he was in that passion of rage—that I did not dare come near him when I had got it. We sent for the policeman therefore, and of course we sent for the doctor; and presently they both arrived, and were as astonished as we were to see what was taking place.

'When did this fit come on him?' asked the medical man, as the old clock struck five.

'Here she comes, and there she goes,' yelled the governor, starting up from his chair. 'Where are those three thieves? They have robbed me of ten pounds, and board, and horse-hire, and lodging for fifteen days and a half.' (He had been calculating all this, poor fellow, in case they should have really gone away, while he was repeating his foolish sentences.) 'Ride after them—ride!'

Alas! we did ride, but we never came up with

them. They had left our Polly at the station in the four-wheel, but they were off nobody knows where. We found out only, long afterwards, that our visitors were three of the London swell-mob, who had been warned out of York by the detectives during the race week, to which circumstance we had been of course indebted for their patronage. My poor father never held up his head again: the jockey-boys were always wagging theirs whenever they saw him, and crying out: 'Here she comes, and there she goes,' until he was driven into his grave.

It is a sad story from beginning to end; but now, that I have fairly published it, I feel that there is something off my mind. There will be no need for futile attempts upon my part to conceal this disgrace to my family any more. And perhaps, after all, one of the reasons why I am so 'up to the time of day' myself—as we say in Yorkshire—is because of the warning that was afforded to me in my poor father's watching the clock.

AN UNRAVELLED MYSTERY.

INTIMATELY connected with the first impressions derived from Scriptural readings and lessons, the words Babylon, Nineveh, and Assyria have been familiar to us all from early childhood. Yet, when we seriously inquire what it is we really do know respecting the history, or even geographical boundaries of ancient Assyria, we are reluctantly compelled to acknowledge our total ignorance. Profane history, it is true, records the names of three of its monarchs previous to the invasion of the Medes. We read of the Bactrian and Indian expeditions of Ninus, the wondrous works of the masculine Semiramis, the Sybaritic splendours of the effeminate Sardanapalus; but the best judges are undecided whether we should accept these relations as history, or class them among the numberless other fables of the myth-inventing ages.

A new light, however, has lately been thrown upon this most interesting period in the world's history. Modern enterprise had scarcely discovered, ere modern ingenuity began to decipher, with what amount of success we are about to relate, the long-hidden monuments of Assyria. When Mr Layard brought to light the extraordinary bass-reliefs of Koyunjik, a new chapter in the book of history was at once laid open. Not only the inscribed records, but the pursuits, the religious ceremonies and amusements, the modes of warfare and hunting, even the very dresses of a previously unknown people, were first exhibited to modern eyes. And though the inscriptions could not then be deciphered, though the mere style of art of the sculptures was not the least novel element in the strange discovery, still there could be little doubt respecting the antiquity of the monuments, or the purpose for which they were designed. The peculiar wedge-shaped character used in the inscriptions proved that the monuments belonged to a period preceding the conquest of Alexander; for it was known that, after the subjugation of Western Asia by the Macedonians, the cuneiform character fell into disuse; while the custom of recording events and promulgating edicts by inscriptions on stones, was also known to be of the very highest antiquity. Need we say that the divine commands were first given to man on tablets of stone. Job, too, it will be recollected, emphatically exclaims: 'Oh that my words were now written! . . . That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!' Indeed, there could have been no less imperishable method of preserving important national records; and thus it is that the inscribed walls of palaces and rock-tablets have handed down to us, in these latter ages, the authentic history of ancient Assyria.

The character in which these inscriptions are written has been variously named, according to the fancies of different describers. Some term it the arrow-headed; the French, *tête-à-clou*, or nail-headed; the Germans, *keilförmig*, equivalent to our phrase cuneiform, or wedge-shaped; and certainly this last most accurately expresses its peculiar form, each of the letters or syllables being composed of several distinct wedges united in certain combinations. It is considered probable that at first the letters were mere lines, and at a subsequent period the wedge-form was added to them, either as an embellishment, or to give them ideographic properties, similar to the picture-writing of the Egyptians. If the latter, however, were the case, all traces of their symbolical values are irretrievably lost. We may also add, that, like the Egyptians, the Assyrians at a later period of their history possessed a cursive writing of rounded characters, not unlike the Hebrew, which was employed for written documents, while the cuneiform was exclusively reserved for monumental purposes.

The cuneiform character, under certain modifications—the groups of characters representing syllables being diversely combined in different countries—was used over the greater part of Western Asia until, as we have already observed, the overthrow of the ancient Persian Empire by Alexander the Great. To this circumstance we mainly owe the very remarkable progress lately made in deciphering it. The Persian monarchs, previous to the conquest of Alexander, ruled over all the nations using this peculiar form of writing. These consisted of three principal peoples or races. Two of them, the Persian and the Tatar, spoke a dialect not very dissimilar to that still spoken by their descendants. The language of the third, the Babylonians, including the Assyrians, was allied to the Hebrew and Arabic, and totally different from that spoken by the two former races; moreover, it has been extinct and unknown for at least two thousand years. This last was the language which the decipherers of the Assyrian monuments had to reconstruct and reanimate from its equally obscure and long obsolete cuneiform characters. The first step towards the solution of so dark an enigma, was realised by the following circumstance. The Persian kings, when recording important events by inscriptions on stone tablets, used all the three languages spoken by their subjects. Thus originated the trilingual inscriptions of ancient Persia, the tablets containing them being divided into three columns, each written in a different language, and in the respective modification of cuneiform peculiar to each language, yet all three conveying one and the same meaning. The most celebrated of the trilingual inscriptions are found on the palaces of Darius and Xerxes at Persepolis, over the tomb of Darius, and on the rocks of Behistan. The latter, as aids to deciphering the Assyrian monuments, are the most important of any, as they record the principal events in the reign of Darius, and contain long lists of countries, cities, tribes, and kings; proper names being the only reliable index to the values of the cuneiform characters. The Persian version of the trilingual inscriptions, varying little from the modern Persian, having been translated, and its grammar and alphabet reduced to a certainty, a clue was gained to the Assyrian version, and from thence to the monuments discovered by Mr Layard. The clue thus obtained was followed up in defiance of the most formidable obstacles. To instance one, we may just mention that while the Persian modification of the cuneiform contains but thirty-nine signs, there are no less than four hundred in the Assyrian.

The various processes adopted to decipher the Assyrian inscriptions, from the slight clue we have just mentioned; the steps gradually made in the investigation; the going astray and the returning to,

or even the accidentally hitting on, the right path; in short, all the particulars relating to this most extraordinary search in the dark, are of the highest scientific and philological interest, though utterly unsuited for the pages of a popular journal. Nor shall we presume to venture an opinion on the disputed questions respecting the original discovery of the means employed for interpreting the Assyrian cuneiform, or whether it be a Semitic language or not. It must suffice for us to say, that the names of Sir Henry Rawlinson and Dr Hincks will ever be connected with this great triumph of our age and nation: less than a triumph it cannot be termed, for the investigation has been rewarded with complete success.

But though empires rise and fall, and tongues and tribes die out and disappear, still the race of the Van Twillers never becomes extinct: there always have been, and probably ever will be, many members of the family of the doubters. Consequently, though the decipherers of the Assyrian inscriptions detected on the strangely graven tablets the names of persons, cities, and nations, in historical and geographical series, and found them mentioned in proper connection with events recorded in sacred and profane history, still the doubters, gravely shaking their heads, refused to believe in the soundness of the system by which Dr Hincks and Sir Henry Rawlinson interpreted the mysteries of the cuneiform. Nor were the doubters without some show of reason for their unbelief. A great cause of difficulty in deciphering the cuneiform is what have been termed the variants—namely, different letters possessing the same alphabetic value, or, in other words, cuneiform groups representing a syllable, but not always the same syllable—sometimes one, and sometimes another. Accordingly, the doubters, not unreasonably, said that such a licence in the use of letters or syllables must be productive of the greatest uncertainty—that even the ancient Assyrians themselves could not have read a writing of so vague a description, and therefore the interpretations founded upon such a system must necessarily be fallacious. To this the decipherers replied, that experience has proved that the uncertainty arising from the variants is not so great as might be imagined. Most of the cuneiform groups having only one value, others having always the same value in the same word or phrase, so the remaining difficulties and uncertainties of reading are reduced within moderate limits. Besides, speaking practically, and taking into consideration the newness of the study, there is a fair amount of agreement between different interpreters of the Assyrian historical writings of average difficulty.

The doubters, however, not being satisfied, advantage was taken of an opportunity which lately occurred to test, as closely as possible, the truth of the system of decipherment adopted by Dr Hincks and Sir Henry Rawlinson, not only with the view of silencing the unbelievers, but also to prove that a correct basis of translation had been established, upon which other and future investigators could implicitly rely.

Her Majesty's government having sanctioned the trustees of the British Museum to publish lithographed copies of the most interesting Assyrian inscriptions, under the superintendence of Sir Henry Rawlinson; and Sir Henry having announced his intention of publishing translations of those lithographs, accompanied with transcriptions of the same into Roman letters, it occurred to Mr Fox Talbot that a desirable opportunity was thus offered to test the truth of the system. Accordingly, in March last, Mr Talbot prepared a translation of the first lithographed inscription, and transmitted it sealed to the Royal Asiatic Society, with a request that the Society would preserve it sealed, until Sir Henry's translation was published, and then compare the two—Mr Talbot considering that if any special agreement appeared between these

two independent versions, made by two different persons, without any communication with each other, such agreement must indicate that the versions had at least truth for their basis. The inscription selected for the purpose, a cylinder recording the achievements of Tiglath-pileser,* was exceedingly well suited for a comparison of this description, as it treats of various matters, changing abruptly from one to the other, and abounds in proper names, and statements of specific facts.

Upon the receipt of this communication, the council of the Society resolved that immediate measures should be taken to carry into effect the comparison suggested by Mr Talbot, but on a more extended scale. With this view, it was determined to request Sir Henry Rawlinson, Dr Hincks, and Dr Oppert to favour the Society with translations of the same inscription, to be sent, like Mr Talbot's, under a sealed cover, so that all four might be simultaneously opened, and compared by a committee appointed for the purpose. Application having been made to the above-named gentlemen, and they having heartily responded to the views of the Society, a committee, consisting of the Dean of St Paul's, Dr Whewell, Sir Gardner Wilkinson, Mr Grote, Mr Cureton, and Professor H. H. Wilson—than whom none better adapted could have been chosen—were requested to examine, and compare the four versions of the same inscription made by four different persons, in distant places, without mutual communication; and to determine how far these versions agreed in their general sense, and in the specific meanings assigned to the words.

The four translations having been forwarded to the Society, and carefully examined by the committee, the latter, having strictly compared them, certified 'that the coincidences between the translations, both as to the general sense and verbal rendering, were very remarkable.' In most parts, they found 'a strong correspondence in the meaning assigned, and occasionally a curious identity of expression as to particular words. Where the versions differed very materially, each translator had, in many cases, marked the passage as one of doubtful or unascertained signification. In the interpretation of numbers, there was throughout a singular correspondence.'

By all the translators, the inscription was understood to relate to King Tiglath-pileser, to his campaigns, building and consecration of temples, and other royal acts; campaigns against nations bearing names mostly analogous to those known from the sacred writings, and from other ancient authorities; temples to deities with appellations bearing the same resemblance to those found in other quarters. There was a constant recurrence of these words, names, and titles, yet a sufficient variety of words to test, to a certain degree, the extent of the knowledge claimed by the translators of the sound of the words, and of the language to which the words are supposed to belong. As a specimen of the inscription, and a fair average sample of the general concurrence existing among the four translations, the following versions of the same passage, with the names of the translators, may not be altogether devoid of interest to the reader:

Rawlinson.—Then I went on to the country of Comukha, which was disobedient and withheld the tribute and offerings due to Ashur my lord; I conquered the whole country of Comukha. I plundered their movables, their wealth, and their valuables. Their cities I burned with fire, I destroyed and ruined.

Talbot.—I then advanced against Kummikhi, a land of the unbelievers who had refused to pay taxes and tribute unto Ashur, my lord. The land of Kummikhi throughout all its extent I ravaged. Their women,

&c., I carried off. Their cities I burned with fire, destroyed, and overthrew.

Hincks.—At that time I went to a disaffected part of Qummukh, which had withheld the tribute by weight and tale belonging to Assur, my lord. I subdued the land of Qummukh as far as it extended. I brought out their women, their slaves, and their cattle; their towns I burned with fire, threw down, and dug up.

Oppert.—In these days I went to the people of Dummukh, the enemy who owed tributes and gifts to the god Asur, my lord. I subdued the people of Dummukh for its punishment (?). I took away their captives, their herds, and their treasures; their cities I burnt in fire; I destroyed, I undermined them.

The mere verbal expression of the purport of the above versions is certainly as close as could reasonably be expected from four different translations of any modern language. In some instances, however, the translators admitted that certain passages were obscure, and, indeed, the values of several common Assyrian words still remain to be established. Thus, where Pileser records his hunting exploits, Rawlinson makes the game 'wild buffaloes'; Hincks, 'wild elephants'; while Talbot, not venturing a translation, retains the original word, '*amsi*.' But in the general sense of killing or taking alive wild animals of some kind or other, they are all agreed. In a dead language, and more especially in one like the Assyrian, where symbolic signs are frequently used instead of phonetic letters, it is only natural to suppose that some words and names of persons, animals, or objects would be uncertain. Still, the occasional differences among the four translators, in the mode of interpreting certain words and sentences, may be accepted as a guarantee—if such were required—of the complete fairness of the undertaking, particularly when we find that those differences are uniform; the words or sentences so varying, having the same meaning assigned to them wherever they occur. A fair example of agreement and disagreement will be found in the following several translations of the closing paragraphs of the inscription, in which imprecations are denounced upon any future monarchs who may in any way deface the stone-engraved records of the mighty Tiglath:

Rawlinson.—Whoever shall injure my tablets and cylinders, or shall moisten them with water, or scorch them with fire, or expose them to the air, or in the holy place of God shall assign them a position where they cannot be seen or understood, or who shall erase the writing and inscribe his own name, or who shall divide the sculptures (?), and break them off from my tablets, Anu and Vul, the great gods my lords, let them consign his name to perdition; let them curse him with irrevocable curse; let them cause his sovereignty to perish; let them pluck out the stability of the throne of his empire.

Talbot.—But he who my stone tablets and my memorial records shall injure, or shall destroy them: with water shall efface them: or with fire shall consume them: or shall deface the writings: or shall write his name (*instead of mine*): or shall cut away the emblems: or who shall break in pieces the face of my tablets: May Anu and Yen, the great gods, my lords, utterly confound him; may their curses fall upon him; may they sweep away his kingly power; may his enemies carry off his royal throne.

Hincks.—He who shall hide or obliterate my tablets and my floors shall wander on the waters, shall be suspended in the fires, shall be besmeared with earth, shall be assigned by adjudication an unpleasant place in the excellent house on high. He shall survive few years, and shall write his name where some enemy shall speedily deface it, and shall have it (that is, the tablet containing it) broken against my tablets! May Anu and Iv, the great gods, my lords, energetically punish

* 2 Kings, xv. 20; xvi. 7, 10.

him! and may they curse him with a *destroying* curse! May they *depress* his kingdom! may they remove . . . the throne of his dominion.

Opport.—He who hides or defaces my tablets, and my angular stones, who throws them into the water, who burns them with fire, who spreads them to the winds, who transports them to the house of death, to a place without life, who steals the cylinders (?), who engraves on them his name, and . . . who injures my tablets: May Anu and Ao, the great gods, my lords, load his name with infamy; may they curse him with the worst imprecations! May they subdue his sister; may they deport the districts of his kingdom.

Upon the whole, the result of this very curious experiment—than which a fairer test could not, in all probability, be devised—may be considered as establishing, almost definitely, the correctness of the valuation of the characters of the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions; and though it be quite possible that further researches may find something to alter or to add, still the greater portion, if not the whole of those remarkable records, may now be read with entire confidence. The almost invariable concurrence of the translators in the general sense, proves that they are agreed to give the same interpretation to the greater portion of the vocabulary. At the same time, the differences shew that a good deal remains to be effected ere the sense of every individual term can be confidently rendered. Where so much, however, has been accomplished in so short a period, and under such extraordinary difficulties, there surely is every reason to hope that the remaining uncertainties will ultimately and speedily be overcome. At all events, the ancient Assyrian language, with its grotesque, arrow-headed character, so inexplicable but a few years past, is, at the present time, nothing more than an unravelled mystery.

THE MISLETOE-BOUGH.

EVERY occupier in London, whether of house, floor, or attic, strains a point at Christmas to adorn his sashes and mantel-pieces with holly; and the hook in the ceiling, suggestive of a chandelier, but generally used to support the fly-trap, bears at this season the misletoe, and renders even the otherwise drear and chilly two-pair back a scene, for the time, of cheerfulness and mirth.

As to the demand and supply, no one troubles himself to consider from whence these masses of green stuff come. If the question is asked, the reply is prompt: 'Petty larceny and the suburbs of the metropolis.' This appears to be the conviction of all. Now, the larceny must be pretty extensive, as well as the suburbs, to supply our wants in this respect; and if even the churches alone depended on these sources, ill-fated Clapham and Haverstock Hill would have a rare time of it, and Leicester Square would soon surpass them in rural appearance and verdure.

But if we give the subject a moment's consideration, our curiosity will be awakened, and we shall be sent further afield, in quest of more extensive areas from whence to draw our Christmas garnishings than those so commonly suggested. Our supply of holly and misletoe does *not* come 'promiscuously'; it is a matter of commerce, and, as such, is regulated by the same rules and precise arrangements as the other branches of our commercial economy. Our requirements in this particular are as surely anticipated and carefully calculated as any other of our social wants; and the metropolitan supply of what is generally described by the general term of 'Christmas,' is as zealously cared for as the providing of our Christmas beef or summer strawberries. No deficiency is ever felt—no residue is left. The supply is adjusted to the demand, and the trade is of sufficient importance to engage men of capital and business minds; and thus

at a given time, and at a cheap rate, our sashes and mantel-pieces receive their due.

The south-western counties supply a goodly proportion of our Christmas; a considerable quantity comes even from Wales; large quantities from the neighbourhood of Bromley, Seven Oaks, and Maidstone. The weald of Kent also furnishes its quota; railways are called to lend a hand; and at length the mighty mass arrives at market, fresh, and but few berries the worse.

Market-gardeners, and others connected with London markets, tempted by the certain sale, keep a watchful eye during the year on all shrubberies, ready at a moment's notice to drive a bargain; and at the same time, in all probability, from prudent thinning, to improve the hedge.

Small hucksters range the country some time before Christmas, and bargain for holly, as it stands, to be cut and cleared at their convenience. These, in their turn, sell to larger dealers, who consign to their London customers; and thus, through divers channels, and wheels within wheels, we decorate our sashes and our mantel-shelves.

It is holly-morning at Covent Garden. The Tuesday before Christmas is sacred to the work. During the whole of the preceding night, wagons have been pouring in from all quarters, until every avenue to the market is choked up. Bedford Street and James Street are alone set apart for the vehicles of buyers. Every other nook and corner is jammed and crammed with carts and wagons, piled up as high as the second-floor windows with stacks of green-stuff.

In some parts, to save space, wagons are backed to the kerb, and are wedged together the whole length of the street; and with other contradictory arrangements, and no arrangements at all, a stranger, once within the meshes of the evergreen labyrinth, has but one thing to care for—and that is, how to find his way out.

St Paul's clock has chimed four—in a pitch-dark morning—and the ball opens in earnest. The eager salesmen stalk round the green stacks, flashing links fixed to the top of twelve-feet poles, and loudly descanting on the quality of their loads. Compared with theirs, the eloquence of Cheap Jacks and George Robinses sink into insignificance. They are assisted by two small boys, indispensable to every load, who are perched aloft on the stacks, and whose business it is to fish up, with long sticks, tempting bunches, which they hold out on end, with loud yells, and so serve to illustrate the florid statements of the salesman below. Amongst the buyers are found a large sprinkling of the fair sex, and these in nowise the most incapable of driving shrewd and hard bargains. At this time of the year, shops open later than usual. Husbands have taken the late trade and shutting-up business, whilst wives retire early, and take the morning market.

The bunches are bundled and weighed, and both the quantity of berries ascertained and the consequent freshness of the stuff; and it would excite no small surprise in the mind of a novice to see the amount of hard bargaining involved in the sale of that which many people believe may be had for the trouble of asking.

Loads of misletoe come to market worth thirty pounds each. The retail price ranges from one shilling and sixpence to three half-crowns per bunch; holly from ninepence to three shillings per bundle. Prices vary, of course, each season, dependent on the abundance or scarcity of the articles. The present season has been a prolific one, and prices have ruled accordingly.

It is now near seven o'clock, and the exhortations of the salesmen, the yells of the boys, the murmur of the crowd, and the imprecations of the porters as they endeavour to urge their heavy loads through the living

masses, are by this time half wearisome and half appalling, and the stranger finds it desirable to escape from the scene.

Nine o'clock, and the masses of evergreens have melted away; an hour or two later, and our houses are decorated with their 'Christmas,' and the faces of the busy Londoners brighten into smiles as they find themselves once more under the misletoe-bough.

O C E O L A :

A ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXV.—WHO FIRED THE SHOT?

'YELLOW JAKE?' I repeated, in the usual style of involuntary interrogative—of course without the slightest faith in my companion's statement. 'Saw Yellow Jake, you say?'

'Yes, Massr George,' replied my groom, getting a little over his fright: 'sure as de sun, I see 'im—eytha 'im or 'im ghost.'

'Oh, nonsense! there are no ghosts: your eyes deceived you under the shadow of the trees. It must have been an illusion.'

'By Gor! Massr George,' rejoined the black with emphatic earnestness, 'I swar I see 'im—'twant no daloosyun, I see—'twar eytha Yell' Jake or 'im ghost.'

'Impossible!'

'Den, massr, ef't be impossible, it am de troof. Sure as da gospel, I see Yell' Jake; he fire at you from ahind tha gum-tree. Den I fire at 'im. Sure, Massr George, you hear boaf de two shot?'

'True; I heard two shots, or fancied I did.'

'Gollys! massr, da wa'nt no fancy 'bout 'em. Whugh! no—da dam raskel he fire, sure. Lookee da, Massr George! What I say? Lookee da!'

We had been advancing towards the pond, and were now close to the magnolia under whose shade I had slept. I observed Jake in a stooping attitude under the tree, and pointing to its trunk. I looked in the direction indicated. Low down, on the smooth bark, I saw the score of a bullet. It had creased the tree, and passed onward. The wound was green and fresh, the sap still flowing. Beyond doubt, I had been fired at by some one, and missed only by an inch. The leaden missile must have passed close to my head where it rested upon the valise—close to my ears, too, for I now remembered that almost simultaneously with the first report, I had heard the 'wheep' of a bullet.

'Now, you b'lieve um, Massr George?' interposed the black with an air of confident interrogation. 'Now you b'lieve dat dis chile see no daloosyun?'

'Certainly, I believe that I have been shot at by some one'—

'Yell' Jake, Massr George! Yell' Jake, by Gor!' earnestly asseverated my companion. 'I seed da yaller raskel plain's I see dat log afore me.'

'Yellow skin or red skin, we can't shift our quarters too soon. Give me the rifle: I shall keep watch while you are saddling. Haste, and let us be gone!'

I speedily reloaded the piece; and, placing myself behind the trunk of a tree, turned my eyes in that direction whence the shot must have come. The black brought the horses to the rear of my position, and proceeded with all dispatch to saddle them, and buckle on our *impedimenta*.

I need not say that I watched with anxiety—with fear. Such a deadly attempt proved that a deadly enemy was near, whoever he might be. The supposition that it was Yellow Jake was too preposterous. I, of course, ridiculed the idea. I had been an eye-witness of his certain and awful doom; and it would have required stronger testimony than even the solemn declaration of my companion, to have given me faith either in a ghost or a resurrection. I had been fired

at—that fact could not be questioned—and by some one, whom my follower—under the uncertain light of the gloomy forest, and blinded by his fears—had taken for Yellow Jake. Of course this was a fancy—a mistake as to the personal identity of our unknown enemy. There could be no other explanation.

Ha! why was I at that moment dreaming of him—of the mulatto? And why such a dream? If I were to believe the statement of the black, it was the very realisation of that unpleasant vision that had just passed before me in my sleep.

A cold shuddering came over me—my blood grew chill within my veins—my flesh crawled, as I thought over this most singular coincidence. There was something awful in it—something so damnably probable, that I began to think there was truth in the solemn allegation of the black; and the more I pondered upon it, the less power felt I to impeach his veracity.

Why should an Indian, thus unprovoked, have singled me out for his deadly aim? True, there was hostility between red and white, but not war. Surely it had not yet come to this? The council of chiefs had not met—the meeting was fixed for the following day; and, until its result should be known, it was not likely that hostilities would be practised on either side. Such would materially influence the determinations of the projected assembly. The Indians were as much interested in keeping the peace as their white adversaries—ay, far more indeed—and they could not help knowing that an ill-timed demonstration of this kind would be to their disadvantage—just the very pretext which the 'removal' party would have wished for.

Could it, then, have been an Indian who aimed at my life? And if not, who in the world besides had a motive for killing me? I could think of no one whom I had offended—at least no one that I had provoked to such deadly retribution.

The drunken drovers came into my mind. Little would they care for treaties or the result of the council. A horse, a saddle, a gun, a trinket, would weigh more in their eyes than the safety of their whole tribe. Both were evidently true bandits—for there are robbers among red skins as well as white ones.

But no; it could not have been they? They had not seen us as we passed, or, even if they had, they could hardly have been upon the ground so soon? We had ridden briskly, after leaving them; and they were afoot.

Spence and Williams were mounted; and from what Jake had told me as we rode along in regard to the past history of these two 'rowdies,' I could believe them capable of anything—even of that.

But it was scarcely probable either: they had not seen us; and besides they had their hands full.

Ha! I guessed it at last; at all events I had hit upon the most probable conjecture. The villain was some runaway from the settlements, some absconding slave—perhaps ill-treated—who had sworn eternal hostility to the whites; and who was thus wreaking his vengeance on the first who had crossed his path. A mulatto, no doubt; and, may be, bearing some resemblance to Yellow Jake—for there is a general similarity among men of yellow complexion, as among blacks.

This would explain the delusion under which my companion was labouring; at all events, it rendered his mistake more natural; and with this supposition, whether true or false, I was forced to content myself.

Jake had now got everything in readiness; and, without staying to seek any further solution of the mystery, we leaped to our saddles, and galloped away from the ground.

We rode for some time with the 'beard on the shoulder;' and, as our path now lay through thin woods, we could see for a long distance behind us.

No enemy, white or black, red or yellow, made his appearance, either on our front, flank, or rear. We encountered not a living creature till we rode up to the stockade of Fort King;* which we entered, just as the sun was sinking behind the dark line of the forest horizon.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FRONTIER FORT.

The word 'fort' calls up before the mind a massive structure, with angles and embrasures, bastions and battlements, curtains, casemates, and glacis—a place of great strength, for this is its essential signification. Such structures have the Spaniards raised—in Florida as elsewhere—some of which are still standing,† while others, even in their ruins, bear witness to the grandeur and glory that enveloped them at that time, when the leopard flag waved proudly above their walls.

There is a remarkable dissimilarity between the colonial architecture of Spain and that of other European nations. In America, the Spaniards built without regard to pains or expense, as if they believed that their tenure would be eternal. Even in Florida, they could have had no idea their lease was to be so short—no forecast of so early an ejection.

After all, these great fortresses served them a purpose. But for their protection, the dark Yemassee, and, after him, the conquering Seminole, would have driven them from the flowery peninsula long before the period of their actual rendition.

The United States has its great stone fortresses; but far different from these are the 'forts' of frontier phraseology, which figure in the story of border war, and which at this hour gird the territory of the United States as with a gigantic chain. In these are no grand battlements of cut rock, no costly casemates, no idle ornaments of engineering. They are rude erections of hewn logs, of temporary intent, put up at little expense, to be abandoned with as little loss—ready to follow the ever-flitting frontier in its rapid recession.

Such structures are admirably adapted to the purpose which they are required to serve. They are types of the utilitarian spirit of a republican government, not permitted to squander national wealth on such costly toys as Thames Tunnels and Britannia Bridges, at the expense of an overtaxed people. To fortify against an Indian enemy, proceed as follows:

Obtain a few hundred trees; cut them to lengths of eighteen feet; split them up the middle; set them in a quadrangle side by side, flat faces inward; batten them together; point them at the tops; loophole eight feet from the ground; place a staging under the loopholes; dig a ditch outside; build a pair of bastions at alternate corners, in which plant your cannon; hang a strong gate—and you have a 'frontier fort.'

It may be a triangle, a quadrangle, or any other polygon best suited to the ground.

You need quarters for your troops and stores. Build strong block-houses within the enclosure—some at the angles, if you please; loophole them also—against the contingency of the stockade being carried; and this done, your fort is finished.

Pine-trees serve well. Their tall, branchless stems are readily cut and split to the proper lengths; but in Florida is found a timber still better for the purpose—in the trunk of the 'cabbage palm.'‡ These, from the peculiarity of their endogenous texture, are less liable to be shattered by shot, and the bullet buries itself harmlessly in the wood. Of such materials was Fort King.

* Called after a distinguished officer in the American army. Such is the fashion in naming the frontier posts.

† Forts Picolata on the St Johns, Fort San Augustine, and others at Pensacola, St Marks, and elsewhere.

‡ *Chamærops palmæto*.

Fancy, then, such a stockade fort. People it with a few hundred soldiers—some in jacket uniforms of faded sky-colour, with white facings, sadly dimmed with dirt (the infantry); some in darker blue, bestriped with red (the artillery); a few adorned with the more showy yellow (the dragoons); and still another few in the sombre green of the rifles. Fancy these men lounging about, or standing in groups, in slouching attitudes, and slouchingly attired—a few of tidier aspect, with pipe-clayed belts and bayonets by their sides, on sentry, or forming the daily guard—some half-score of slattern women, their laundress-wives, mingling with a like number of brown-skinned squaws—a sprinkling of squalling brats—here and there an officer hurrying along, distinguished by his dark-blue undress frock*—half-a-dozen gentlemen in civilian garb—visitors or non-military *attachés* of the fort—a score less gentle-looking—sutlers, beef-contractors, drovers, butchers, guides, hunters, gamblers, and idlers—some negro servants and friendly Indians—perhaps the pompous commissioner himself—fancy all these before you, with the star-spangled flag waving above your head, and you have the *coup d'œil* that presented itself as I rode into the gateway of Fort King.

Of late not much used to the saddle, the ride had fatigued me. I heard the *reveille*, but not yet being ordered on duty, I disregarded the call, and kept my bed till a later hour.

The notes of a bugle bursting through the open window, and the quick rolling of drums, once more awoke me. I recognised the parade music, and sprang from my couch. Jake at this moment entered to assist me in my toilet.

'Golly, Massar George!' he exclaimed, pointing out by the window: 'lookkee dar! dar's tha whole Indy-en ob tha Seminole nayslunn—ebbery red skin dar be in ole Floridy. Whuh!'

I looked forth. The scene was picturesque and impressive. Inside the stockade, soldiers were hurrying to and fro—the different companies forming for parade. They were no longer, as on the evening before, slouched and loosely attired; but, with jackets close buttoned, caps jauntily cocked, belts pipe-clayed to a snowy whiteness, guns, bayonets, and buttons gleaming under the sunlight, they presented a fine military aspect. Officers were moving among them, distinguished by their more splendid uniforms and shining epaulets; and a little apart stood the general himself, surrounded by his staff, conspicuous under large black chapeaus with nodding plumes of cock's feathers, white and scarlet. Alongside the general was the commissioner—himself a general—in full government uniform.

This grand display was intended for effect on the minds of the Indians.

There were several well-dressed civilians within the enclosure, planters from the neighbourhood, among whom I recognised the Ringolds.

So far the impressive. The picturesque lay beyond the stockade.

On the level plain that stretched to a distance of several hundred yards in front, were groups of tall Indian warriors, attired in all their savage finery—turbaned, painted, and plumed. No two were dressed exactly alike, and yet there was a similarity in the style of all. Some wore hunting-shirts of buckskin, with leggings and moccasins of like material—all profusely fringed, beaded, and tasselled; others were clad in tunics of printed cotton stuff, checked or flowered, with leggings of cloth, blue, green, or scarlet, reaching from hip to ankle, and girt below the knee with bead-

* An American officer is rarely to be seen in full uniform—still more rarely when on campaigning service, as in Florida.

embroidered gaiters, whose tagged and tasselled ends hung down the outside of the leg. The gorgeous wampum belt encircled their waists, behind which were stuck their long knives, tomahawks, and in some instances pistols glittering with a rich inlay of silver—relics left them by the Spaniards. Some, instead of the Indian wampum, encircled their waists with the Spanish scarf of scarlet silk, its fringed extremities hanging square with the skirt of the tunic, adding gracefulness to the garment. A picturesque head-dress was not wanting to complete the striking costume; and in this the variety was still greater. Some wore the beautiful coronet of plumes—the feathers stained to a variety of brilliant hues; some the 'toque' of checked 'bandanna,' while others wore shako-like caps of fur—of the black squirrel, the bay lynx, or racoon—the face of the animal often fantastically set to the front. The heads of many were covered with broad fillets of embroidered wampum, out of which stood the wing-plumes of the king-vulture, or the gossamer feathers of the sand-hill crane. A few were still further distinguished by the nodding plumes of the great bird of Afric.

All carried guns—the long rifle of the backwoods hunter, with horns and pouches slung from their shoulders. Neither bow nor arrow was to be seen, except in the hands of the youth—many of whom were upon the ground, mingling with the warriors.

Further off, I could see tents, where the Indians had pitched their camp. They were not together, but scattered along the edge of the wood, here and there in clusters, with banners floating in front—denoting the different clans or sub-tribes to which each belonged.

Women in their long frocks could be seen moving among the tents, and little dark-skinned 'papooses' were playing over the grassy sward in front of them.

When I first saw them, the warriors were assembling in front of the stockade. Some had already arrived, and stood in little crowds conversing, while others strode over the ground, passing from group to group, as if bearing words of counsel from one to the other.

I could not help observing the upright carriage of these magnificent men. I could not help admiring their full free port, and contrasting it with the gingerly step of the drilled soldier! No eye could have looked upon both without acknowledging this superiority of the savage.

As I glanced along the line of Saxon and Celtic soldiery—starched and stiff as they stood, shoulder to shoulder, and heel to heel—and then looked upon the plumed warriors without, as they proudly strode over the sward of their native soil, I could not help the reflection, that to conquer these men we must needs outnumber them!

I should have been laughed at had I given expression to the thought. It was contrary to all experience—contrary to the burden of many a boasting legend of the borders. The Indian had always succumbed; but was it to the superior strength and courage of his white antagonist? No; the inequality lay in numbers—oftener in arms. This was the secret of our superiority. What could avail the wet bowstring and ill-aimed shaft against the death-dealing bullet of the rifle?

There was no inequality now. Those hunter-warriors carried the fire-weapon, and could handle it as skillfully as we.

The Indians now formed into a half-circle in front of the fort. The chiefs, having aligned themselves so as to form the concave side of the curve, sat down upon the grass. Behind them, the sub-chiefs and more noted warriors took their places, and still further back, in rank after rank, stood the common men of the tribes. Even the women and boys drew near, clustering thickly behind, and regarding the movements of the men with quiet but eager interest.

Contrary to their usual habits, they were grave and

silent. It is not their character to be so; for the Seminole is as free of speech and laughter as the clown of the circus ring; even the light-hearted negro scarcely equals him in joviality.

It was not so now, but the very reverse. Chiefs, warriors, and women—even the boys who had just forsaken their play—all wore an aspect of solemnity.

No wonder. That was no ordinary assemblage—no meeting upon a trivial matter—but a council at which was to be decided one of the dearest interests of their lives—a council whose decree might part them for ever from their native land. No wonder they did not exhibit their habitual gaiety.

It is not correct to say that all looked grave. In that semicircle of chiefs were men of opposite views. There were those who wished for the removal—who had private reasons to desire it—men bribed, suborned, or tampered with—traitors to their tribe and nation.

These were neither weak nor few. Some of the most powerful chiefs had been bought over, and had agreed to sell the rights of their people. Their treason was known or suspected, and this it was that was causing the anxiety of the others. Had it been otherwise—had there been no division in their ranks—the patriot party might easily have obtained a triumphant decision; but they feared the defection of the traitors.

The band had struck up a march—the troops were in motion, and filing through the gate.

Hurrying on my uniform, I hastened out; and took my place among the staff of the general.

A few minutes after, we were on the ground, face to face with the assembled chiefs.

The troops formed in line, the general taking his stand in front of the colours, with the commissioner by his side. Behind these were grouped the officers of the staff, with clerks, interpreters, and some civilians of note—the Ringolds, and others—who, by courtesy, were to take part in the proceedings.

Hands were shaken between the officers and chiefs; the friendly calumet was passed round; and the council at length inaugurated.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COUNCIL.

First came the speech of the commissioner.

It is too voluminous to be given in detail. Its chief points were, an appeal to the Indians to conform peaceably to the terms of the Oclawaha treaty—to yield up their lands in Florida—to move to the west—to the country assigned them upon the White River of Arkansas—in short, to accept all the terms which the government had commissioned him to require.

He took pains to specify the advantages which would accrue from the removal. He painted the new home as a perfect paradise—prairies covered with game, elk, antelopes, and buffalo—rivers teeming with fish—crystal waters, and unclouded skies. Could he have found credence for his words, the Seminole might have fancied that the happy hunting-grounds of his fancied heaven existed in reality upon the earth.

On the other hand, he pointed out to the Indians the consequences of their non-compliance. White men would be settling thickly along their borders. Bad white men would enter upon their lands; there would be strife, and the spilling of blood; the red man would be tried in the court of the white man, where, according to law, his oath would be of no avail; and therefore he must suffer injustice!

Such were in reality the sentiments of Mr Commissioner Wiley Thompson,* uttered in the council of Fort King, in April 1835. I shall give them in his own words: they are worthy of record, as a specimen of fair dealing between white and red. Thus spoke he:

* Historically true.

'Suppose—what is, however, impossible—that you could be permitted to remain here for a few years longer, what would be your condition? This land will soon be surveyed, sold to, and settled by the whites. *There is now a surveyor in the country.* The jurisdiction of the government will soon be extended over you. Your laws will be set aside—your chiefs will cease to be chiefs. Claims for debt and for your negroes would be set up against you by bad white men; or you would perhaps be charged with crimes affecting life. You would be hailed before the white man's court. The claims and charges would be decided by the white man's law. White men would be witnesses against you. Indians would not be permitted to give evidence. Your condition in a few years would be hopeless wretchedness. You would be reduced to abject poverty, and when urged by hunger to ask—perhaps from the man who had thus ruined you—for a crust of bread, you might be called an Indian dog, and spurned from his presence. For this reason it is that your "Great Father(!)" wishes to remove you to the West—to save you from all these evils.'

And this language in the face of a former treaty—that of Camp Moultrie—which guaranteed to the Seminoles their right to remain in Florida, and the third article of which runs thus:

'The United States will take the Florida Indians under their care and patronage; and will afford them protection against all persons whatsoever.'

O tempora, O mores!

The speech was a mixture of sophistry and implied menace—now uttered in the tones of a petitioner, anon assuming the bold air of the bully. It was by no means clever—both characters being overdone.

The commissioner felt no positive hostility towards the Seminoles. He was indignant only with those chiefs who had already raised opposition to his designs, and one, in particular, he *hated*; but the principal *animus* by which he was inspired, was a desire to do the work for which he had been delegated—an ambition to carry out the wish of his government and nation, and thus gain for himself credit and glory. At this shrine he was ready—as most officials are—to sacrifice his personal independence of thought, with every principle of morality and honour. What matters the cause so long as it is the king's? Make it 'congress' instead of 'king's, and you have the motto of our Indian agent.

Shallow as was the speech, it was not without its effects. The weak and wavering were influenced by it. The flattering sketch of their new home, with the contrasted awful picture of what might be their future condition, affected the minds of many. During that spring the Seminoles had planted but little corn. The summons of war had been sounding in their ears; and they had neglected seed-time: there would be no harvest—no maize, nor rice, nor yams. Already were they suffering from their improvidence. Even then were they collecting the roots of the China briar,* and the acorns of the live-oak. How much worse would be their condition in the winter?

It is not to be wondered at that they gave way to apprehension; and I noticed many whose countenances bore an expression of awe. Even the patriot chiefs appeared to evince some apprehension for the result.

They were not dismayed, however. After a short interval, Hoitle-mattee, one of the strongest opponents of the removal, rose to reply. There is no order of precedence in such matters. The tribes have their acknowledged orators, who are usually permitted to express the sentiments of the rest. The head-chief was present, seated in the middle of the ring, with a

British crown upon his head—a relic of the American revolution. But 'Onopa' was no orator, and waved his right to reply in favour of Hoitle-mattee—his son-in-law.

The latter had the double reputation of being a wise councillor and brave warrior; he was, furthermore, one of the most eloquent speakers in the nation. He was the 'prime-minister' of Onopa, and, to carry the comparison into classic times, he might be styled the Ulysses of his people. He was a tall, spare man, of dark complexion, sharp aquiline features, and somewhat sinister aspect. He was not of the Seminole race, but, as he stated himself, a descendant of one of the ancient tribes who peopled Florida in the days of the early Spaniards. Perhaps he was a Yamasee, and his dark skin would favour this supposition.

His powers of oratory may be gathered from his speech:

'At the treaty of Moultrie, it was engaged that we should rest in peace upon the land allotted to us for twenty years. All difficulties were buried, and we were assured that if we died, it should not be by the violence of the white man, but in the course of nature. The lightning should not rive and blast the tree, but the cold of old age should dry up the sap, and the leaves should wither and fall, and the branches drop, and the trunk decay and die.

'The deputation stipulated at the talk on the Oclawaha to be sent on the part of the nation, was only authorised to *examine* the country to which it was proposed to remove us, and bring back its report to the nation. We went according to agreement, and saw the land. It is no doubt good land, and the fruit of the soil may smell sweet, and taste well, and be healthy, but it is surrounded with bad and hostile neighbours, and the fruit of bad neighbourhood is blood that spoils the land, and fire that dries up the brook. Even of the horses we carried with us, some were stolen by the Pawnees, and the riders obliged to carry their packs on their back. You would send us among bad Indians, with whom we could never be at rest.

'When we saw the land, we said nothing; but the agents of the United States made us sign our hands to a paper which you say signified our consent to remove, but we *considered* we did no more than say we liked the land, and when we returned, the *nation* would decide. We had no authority to do more.

'Your talk is a good one, but my people cannot say they will go. The people differ in their opinions, and must be indulged with time to reflect. They cannot consent now; they are not willing to go. If their tongues say yes, their hearts cry no, and call them liars. We are not hungry for other lands—why should we go and hunt for them? We like our own land, we are happy here. If suddenly we tear our hearts from the homes round which they are twined, our heart-strings will snap. We cannot consent to go—we will not go!'

A chief of the removal party spoke next. He was 'Omata,' one of the most powerful of the tribe, and suspected of an 'alliance' with the agent. His speech was of a pacific character, recommending his red brothers not to make any difficulty, but to act as honourable men, and comply with the treaty of the Oclawaha.

It was evident this chief spoke under restraint. He feared to shew too openly his partiality for the plans of the commissioner, dreading the vengeance of the patriot warriors. These frowned upon him as he stood up, and he was frequently interrupted by Arpiucki, Coa Hajo, and others.

A bolder speech, expressing similar views, was delivered by Lusta Hajo (the Black Clay). He added little to the argument; but by his superior daring, restored the confidence of the traitorous party and the

* *Smilax pseudo-China*. From its roots the Seminoles make the *conti*, a species of jelly—a sweet and nourishing food.

equanimity of the commissioner, who was beginning to exhibit signs of impatience and excitement.

'Holata Mico' next rose on the opposite side—a mild and gentlemanly Indian, and one of the most regarded of the chiefs. He was in ill health, as his appearance indicated; and in consequence of this, his speech was of a more pacific character than it might otherwise have been; for he was well known to be a firm opponent of the removal.

'We come to deliver our talk to-day. We were all made by the same GREAT FATHER; and are all alike his children. We all came from the same mother; and were suckled at the same breast. Therefore, we are brothers; and, as brothers, should not quarrel and let our blood rise up against each other. If the blood of one of us, by each other's blow, should fall upon the earth, it would stain it, and cry aloud for vengeance from the land wherever it had sunk, and call down the frown and the thunder of the great spirit. I am not well. Let others who are stronger speak, and declare their minds.'

Several chiefs rose successively and delivered their opinions. Those for removal followed the strain of Omatla and the Black Clay. They were 'Ohala' (the big warrior), the brothers Itolasse and Charles Omatla, and a few others of less note.

In opposition to these, spoke the patriots 'Acola,' 'Yaha Hajo' (mad wolf), 'Echa Matta' (the water-serpent), 'Poshalla' (the dwarf), and the negro 'Abram.' The last was an old 'refugee,' from Pensacola; but now chief of the blacks living with the Micosauc* tribe, and one of the counsellors of Onopa, over whom he held supreme influence. He spoke English fluently; and at the council—as also that of the Oclawaha—he was the principal interpreter on the part of the Indians. He was a pure negro, with the thick lips, prominent cheek-bones, and other physical peculiarities of his race. He was brave, cool, and sagacious; and though only an adopted chief, he proved to the last the true friend of the people who had honoured him by their confidence. His speech was brief and moderate; nevertheless, it evinced a firm determination to resist the will of the agent.

As yet, the 'king' had not declared himself, and to him the commissioner now appealed. Onopa was a large, stout man, of somewhat dull aspect, but not without a considerable expression of dignity. He was not a man of great intellect, nor yet an orator; and although the head 'mico' of the nation, his influence with the warriors was not equal to that of several chiefs of inferior rank. His decision, therefore, would by no means be regarded as definitive, or binding upon the others; but being nominally 'mico-mico' or chief-chief, and actually head of the largest clan—the Micosaucs—his vote would be likely to turn the scale, one way or the other. If he declared for the removal, the patriots might despair.

There was an interval of breathless silence. The eyes of the whole assemblage, of both red men and white men, rested upon the king. There were only a few who were in the secret of his sentiments; and how he would decide, was to most of those present a matter of uncertainty. Hence the anxiety with which they awaited his words.

At this crisis a movement was observed among the people who stood behind the king. They were making way for some one who was passing through their midst. It was evidently one of authority, for the crowd readily yielded him passage.

The moment after, he appeared in front—a young warrior, proudly caparisoned, and of noble aspect. He wore the insignia of a chief; but it needed not this

to tell that he was one: there was that in his look and bearing which at once pronounced him a leader of men.

His dress was rich, without being frivolous or gay. His tunic, embraced by the bright wampum sash, hung well and gracefully; and the close-fitting leggings of scarlet cloth displayed the perfect sweep of his limbs. His form was a model of strength—terse, well-knit, symmetrical. His head was turbaned with a shawl of brilliant hues; and from the front rose three black ostrich plumes, that drooped backward over the crown till their tips almost touched his shoulders. Various ornaments were suspended from his neck; but one upon his breast was conspicuous. It was a circular plate of gold, with lines radiating from a common centre. It was a representation of the rising sun.

His face was stained of a uniform vermilion red; but despite the levelling effect of the dye, the lineaments of noble features could be traced. A well-formed mouth and chin, thin lips, a jawbone expressive of firmness, a nose slightly aquiline, a high, broad forehead, with eyes that, like the eagle's, seemed strong enough to gaze against the sun.

The appearance of this remarkable man produced an electric effect upon all present. It was similar to that exhibited by the audience in a theatre on the *entrée* of the great tragedian for whom they have been waiting.

Not from the behaviour of the young chief himself—with right modest—but from the action of the others, I perceived that he was in reality the hero of the hour. The *dramatis personæ* who had already performed their parts were evidently but secondary characters; and this was the man for whom all had been waiting.

There followed a movement—a murmur of voices—an excited tremor among the crowd—and then, simultaneously, as if from one throat, was shouted the name:

'OCEOLA!'

CAPTAIN VERSUS CREW.

THE traditional sailor has a place only in the melodrama. There he rolls about the stage like a graceful porpoise, shivering his timbers, and scattering his money with a feeling of equal benevolence, faithful alike to his lass and his grog, and ready at any moment to sink with his ship, to him the Image of a Catholic idolatry, the symbol of love, loyalty, and honour. The actual sailor is not so fine an animal by half. He is still brave, still fond of battle at the rare time he can get it; but the traditions, of which he once formed a part, are gone, and the poetical part of his character is gone with them. The ship is now too costly for a rough seaman's devotion. Since it cannot be floated about the waters in a bandbox, it must be anxiously taken care of, and kept quite out of the way of rocks, shells, and other marine curiosities. The money value of a thing is what Jack is taught to venerate, and the lesson goes home to his own business and bosom. His wages occupy his thoughts, in the way of getting, not spending; his very grog is to some extent stopped, and he gets elevated instead with books; and even his unthinking lass, disliking the prosaic turn he has taken, deserts him for the song-making shoemaker or the taproom-haunting tailor. All influences, whether of soul or sense, whether good or bad, work against the sailor, because they are all jumbled and inconsistent.

For some time past, a new source of sympathy has been sought to be opened on his behalf. The captain turns out to be a sea-ogre, and the moment the innocent and unhappy crew are in blue water, they are subjected to all manner of cruelties and tyrannies. Sometimes they are even driven to mutiny, and melodramatic Jack, for this enforced infidelity to his salt

* The Micosauc (Mikosaunee) or tribe of the 'redstick' was the largest and most warlike clan of the nation. It was under the immediate government of the head-chief Onopa—usually called 'Miconopa.'

(water), finishes the voyage in irons. Unluckily, however, as it is now said, the insubordinate spirit of the crew goes on all the same, whatever be the character of the captain; and in the merchant-service, more especially, it is described as getting worse every day, and that from the most mean and sordid motives. The subject is treated incidentally in a pamphlet printed in Bombay by W. Walker of that city, the object of which is to examine critically the various descriptions of goods imported into India from this country.* Mr Walker seems to be a man of large experience—'an experience,' he tells us, 'gathered at sea and on shore, in the army, in the navy, and the merchant-service, in all quarters of the globe'—and as he has now retired into some civil employment connected with ships and merchandise, his testimony is the more trustworthy.

Our author by no means denies the existence of tyrannical captains, and it would be absurd to do so. Why should there not be tyrants at sea as well as on shore? Why should there not be tyrants in ships as well as in barracks, warehouses, and mills? Mr Walker, however, denies that salt water breeds more ogres than solid land. He says that in the course of his own multifarious experience, he never met with more than one cruel captain, and he was in the navy; and that he never heard from man or boy he sailed with 'that he had ever experienced much rougher fortune.' Public sympathy and public indignation are awakened, then, by exceptional cases which, occurring at sea, and in the peculiar community thrown together in a ship, have a strong and strange interest of their own.

It was thought that the Mercantile Marine Act of 1850 had defined and protected the respective rights of captains and seamen; but the puzzling thing is, that it is precisely since then that the semi-mutinous conduct of the crew has grown to the worst, while the bearing of the officers has become more refined and gentlemanly. We would suggest in explanation, that the difference may be merely that of education—that the officers understand their position, while the more ignorant men abuse their advantages, since they enjoy them in spite of their superiors. But a more alarming change is behind. 'Not only has the conduct of the seamen deteriorated,' says Mr Walker, 'but they are deficient in seamanship as compared with sailors of ten or fifteen years ago, and to an extent which is quite startling to old-salts. I do not exaggerate in putting forward these opinions. I feel confident that the truth can be vouched for by many foremast hands themselves, and certainly by all commanders of ships now serving, as well as those who have retired from a maritime life.'

One cause of this unhappy change seems to be the partial abandonment of the apprenticeship system—a system which is no longer compulsory. 'It is but just to observe that many shipowners were far-sighted enough not to avail themselves of this privilege, as they probably well knew that unless they trained sealads they would fall off in the number of seamen to man their ships. This has now come to pass; and the captains of ships are loud in their complaints as to the want of seamanship in men who now unblushingly enter ships as able seamen, and when they get to sea the captain finds they are unable to take the helm, or a cast of the lead.' The apprentice system, thus left to the discretion of the shipowners, has *offered* our ships; or, as Mr Walker expresses it, 'has found a captain for every one of the splendid fleet of merchant-ships (100 sail) now in our harbour' (Bombay). And what are the qualifications demanded in these captains, requiring the development of apprenticeship? 'A captain is required to be well versed in navigation in

all its branches, from plane trigonometry to great circle-sailing, and from finding the latitude by a meridian altitude to the longitude by a lunar observation. He must be able to conduct his ship to all parts of the world, and to keep her clear of lee-shores, rocks, shoals, and sand-banks. Many captains are even kept on shore by owners to see a new ship built from keel to top-rail. By this experience, thus gained, he becomes an adept in applying a remedy when a defect appears. He must be perfectly acquainted with various trades, such as sailmaker, carpenter, cooper, blacksmith, and sometimes cook. As a doctor, he has to prescribe medicines for his crew, and if, like his prototype on shore, he kills his patient, as a clergyman he has to read the funeral-service over his remains. He must be thoroughly conversant with the maritime laws of all nations. Many of them are invested with the full duties of the merchant, in which capacity he has to exhibit the care and cunning of the lawyer in drawing charter-parties, bills of lading, &c. He is supposed to be a kind and humane man, slow to anger, and of great command of temper; he must on no account ever allow himself to be so irritated as to lift his hand (be the provocation ever so great) against one of his crew. So sure as he does, the *poor ill-treated* (and *insolent*) sailor gets public sympathy, and a reward for his conduct; while the *brutal* captain gets either a heavy fine or imprisonment, or both, and public censure, for his conduct, without any consideration as to the heavy responsibility, anxiety, and frequent difficulty of governing unruly crews.'

What is the difficulty of governing unruly crews? Is it not looked to in the Mercantile Marine Act? To this extent—that insolence or contemptuous language or behaviour to the master or any mate, is punishable by a fine of one day's pay; and striking or assaulting any person on board, two days' pay. An unruly sailor, therefore, is kept in check by the knowledge that he cannot indulge in pummelling his captain at a smaller expense than three shillings and fourpence. When the captain imposes the fine, he is obliged to enter the crime in the log-book, call the offender into the cabin, and read the entry to him. This is still more injurious to discipline than the inadequacy of the punishment; for it shews the ruffian that nothing is trusted to the captain, that his displeasure is of no consequence, except in the literal matter of the three shillings and fourpence. The captain is thus reduced to a state of helplessness: he has no power like him of the navy to enforce his orders; and he is deprived by the laws of the prestige which formerly served as his protection. The Mutiny Act, for extreme cases, is the sole guard of life and ship.

Melodramatic Jack is content and ready to sink with his ship whenever her time comes; but actual Jack has no ship in particular to sink with. He changes every voyage, if he can, and gets up a row to accomplish it. 'The modern merchant-sailor ships in a vessel for a foreign port, and as soon as cables are unbent and anchors stowed, he is ready for his game of insolent insubordination, with a view to his discharge and re-entry into some other service that may captivate his vagrant fancy.' If he can find no fault with the captain, and if the ship is unexceptionable, he has recourse to the bad-provision dodge; and in some cases he is known to have himself tampered with the articles complained of to gain a verdict. But money is the grand motive for leaving his ship. 'When a seaman enters this port, and learns that, whilst he is working for L.2, 10s. a month, the wages given out of Bombay is L.4, he braces up his mind for a row, refusal to do duty, and their consequent penalties—the shadiest wall lounge of the House of Correction, where he can smoke the calumet of peace without its moral binding conditions.' This costs him but a trifle of the wages due to him, and when the pleasant incarceration is

* *Facts for Factories; being Letters on Practical Subjects, suggested by Experiences in Bombay.* Printed at the Education Society's Press, Byculla. 1857.

expired, he finds no difficulty in shipping anew at an improved rate of wages. It is no wonder that we read, as a corollary from all this, that 'American captains will not have anything to do with the modern English merchant-seaman if they can help it. They hunt out the quiet Belgian, and orderly Dane or Norwegian.'

All this, we repeat, is very alarming, even if we make every possible deduction on the score of that exaggeration men are frequently betrayed into when advocating a theory. An evil, however, brought about in the course of a few years is not irremediable. There is good stuff in the seaman to work upon yet; and we would point to his conduct in the Crimea and in India as evidence of his value even on shore. It is for this reason we lend our aid to draw attention to the heavy charge made against him, that it may lead to investigation and reform.

Mr Walker advises a general return to the apprenticeship system; and not only that, but the establishment in every naval port of a training-ship for boys. By this means, we should have abundance of well-trained orderly seamen in readiness for any emergency, instead of having 'to man our Baltic fleet with long-shore riffraff, the spawn of unsuccessful gold-diggers, tempered by a few good and orderly seamen from the Coast-guard, torn from domestic homes and ties.' On board ship he would have the officers repress by every means in their power the filthy and blasphemous language which is the vernacular of the sea, and likewise endeavour to get the men to wear cleaner skins and clothes; since nothing brutalises the mind more than dirty skins and dirty language. Fresh water should be provided, when possible, for ablution and clothes-washing. Divine service should be performed every Sunday, when the weather permits. By means of the American plan of deck-houses, the crew should be emancipated from the dark dungeon of the fore-castle. 'Great ingenuity is displayed in making berths for emigrants when a government commands it. Why should the owner not command the like conveniences for the crews of his ships—the winners of his fortune?' In fine, the captains themselves should be informed that it is mean and dishonest to give the ruffians and bullies of the ship, when the crew are paid off—which they generally do, either from easiness of character or fear of revenge—a V. G. (very good) certificate. Without this certificate, no merchant-captain would employ them; but the 'registrar might give our repudiated man a hint that the *Regenerator* frigate, *Captain Cur'ém*, would enter his name on her books, and no questions asked. He would then learn to crack his biscuit, and live like a good seaman—or taste the * * *. This suggestion might be carried out to-morrow, and would work silently and with certain success.'

A LANCASHIRE INCUMBENT.

It is an old saying, and a true one, that no one knows what he can do till he tries. I am quite sure that powers, of vast capability if called into action, are suffered to lie dormant, either because their possessor may not be aware of their existence, or of his own ability to use them with effect. I remember to have somewhere met with an account of a clergyman, in the English lake district, who was called 'Wonderful Robert Walker,' from the astonishing quantity of work he contrived to get through in a given period. He was the doctor, the accountant, the schoolmaster, as well as the minister of his parish. He was also a mechanic-of-all-work; and his pew in church was lined with cloth spun and woven, I believe, by his own hands. But this ancient wonder is, like many others, quite superseded by some occurring in our own

marvellous day. The brazen colossus at Rhodes is not more outdone by the Victoria Bridge, than is 'Wonderful Walker' by the modern phenomenon, 'a Lancashire incumbent.'

Within the last two years, a great newspaper had roundly charged the English clergy with gross negligence and laxity in carrying out the objects of their mission among the people. We are not going to introduce here any discussion as to the justice of this charge: all we shall say is, that it evoked a reply from a correspondent, who signed himself as above, giving a report of his work within the year then past; and that the same Incumbent has again sent in his *compte rendu* at the close of 1857—on which document I propose to offer a few observations.

Altogether apart from the special calling of the writer, this letter of the incumbent is a highly instructive study to professional young men of every sort. The first lesson which is taught by the fact that such a vast amount of work may be done by one man in a certain time, is, that the mainspring of such successful exertion must be regularity, and a systematic division and employment of time. The second is, that monotony of labour must be avoided; for a change of occupation will often afford recreation as resting and effectual as idleness itself.

'I am still the incumbent of a new parish in a large town; and attached to my own church, which is one of forty within the borough limits, there is a population of 8500.' 'I reside a mile and a quarter from my church and schools. During the year, I was absent on business connected with public objects, 18 days; was unwell—including a fortnight's detention from an accident—26; was kept in the house by bad weather, 4; and took 29 holidays. This leaves 288 to be accounted for, of which I was in the parish on duty, on 168 separate days, 249 times.' 'I have made 1036 visits to the people in their houses, independent of calls on the sick, and others of an incidental kind. I have preached 121 sermons, of which 21 were in other churches—namely, 3 for schools and charities, 3 for religious societies, and 15 in exchange or aid.'

Such is the summary of work done on those 288 days, including the 52 Sabbaths, which must have demanded no small share of mental as well as bodily vigour, no less than a very systematic method of proceeding. One would feel disposed to say that little or no more than this could have been done in the time, and that all relaxation in the enjoyment of society, or application to reading, except so far as connected with sermon-producing, must have been altogether impracticable. But our incumbent is no less a wonder in these respects than in the others. We are informed in a subsequent paragraph, that 'he partook of the hospitality of friends on 165 separate days;' and in this very sensible and necessary relaxation, we may probably find, even on physiological grounds, the secret of his extraordinary endurance. A man requires his play as well as a boy. The overtaxed mind must be relieved as well as the wearied body; and in certain circumstances it is absolutely necessary to mental and bodily health that we should be drawn out of ourselves, and forced to relax our grasp upon anxious and depressing thoughts and cares, in a way which only cheerful society can effect. The body may indeed rest in the easy-chair or the comfortable bed, but the mind will not do so. This quiet and repose are only more favourable to the indulgence of the prevalent and absorbing idea of the time, and in cheerful, innocent society alone lies the remedy for overwork and anxiety.

If the reader imagines that we have got to the end of our incumbent's labours, with the (probably) 8000 to 4000 house-to-house visits mentioned above, and

all the other details which accompany them, he is greatly mistaken.

Within a year or two, a sum of over £10,000 has been raised for schools and other parochial purposes, and all the heavy and complicated machinery connected with this branch of duty has been set agoing. This alone would have seemed enough for one man's work, taking men in general as our standard; but there is still more to be told of the labours of 1857.

'During the year,' again writes our author, 'I have been honorary secretary to four religious societies, and to a fifth whose operations terminate with the year. Of two of these, the duties were merely nominal, but in two others they required very great attention. I am chairman of one permanent committee, and treasurer of two; and during the year, I attended 221 meetings.' Now, keeping in mind the occupations already specified, I would direct attention to the diligence which could still find time for attending the meetings of these societies, and managing their affairs and finances. Many industrious men might have found even this last department of labour quite as much as they could manage; but taken in a cumulative sense, along with what had gone before, we feel quite astounded; and are disposed at length to say with uplifted hands and eyes: 'Oho jam satis!'

No such thing! Full as the list may appear to unpractised eyes, there are in the capabilities of this man, some portions still unoccupied, a corner or two into which some small 'odds and ends' of employment may still be packed. Listen once more: 'The avoidance of meetings, especially in the evenings, has increased my time for intellectual pursuits. I have read about ninety volumes on various subjects, exclusive of pamphlets, reviews, &c. I have also written five magazine articles, three short papers for learned societies, twelve articles of a more fugitive character, on literature, science, and education; and an elaborate paper of instructions for my teachers on the subjects of school-organisation and discipline. I have made twenty-one speeches, and delivered nine public lectures, besides editing a pamphlet of about ninety pages in extent, and, with some assistance, an important volume of 300 pages. But the most tedious intellectual operation was the construction of two ethnological maps of a kind wholly new, and from materials which are common and accessible in every county in the kingdom. Each of them required a minute analysis of about 20,000 facts, yet any of the numerous details indicated may be tested in an instant.'

This paragraph shows that an active mind may be lodged in an active body, and that local and corporeal mobility of a very unusual kind may be associated with mental activity no less remarkable.

But, reader, we have yet more to tell; one more short extract will bring us to the end of this *tot, et tanta, negotia*.

You will say that, in whatever way we are to account for the performance within the year, and even within 288 days of it, of so much physical and intellectual labour, along with the 165 separate days on which the claims of social relaxation were attended to, this would, at the least, entail a necessity for a very snail-like power of staying at home. Again, I say, no such thing. You would further suppose that epistolary correspondence, which, in a small way, so many of us find it hard enough to get through from day to day, could find no place in these herculean labours. Listen, then, once more: 'My correspondence has extended to 1200 letters. I have visited Wales three times; Ireland, twice; the Isle of Man, once; and London and Oxford, once!'

Now, with all this, should you have supposed that there was any room for mechanical occupations within doors? Allow me one 'more last word,' and you shall

hear: 'I have occupied myself at intervals with mechanical duties, which may be described as amateur bookbinding.'

There, reader, is a man for you! I know of nothing to compare with him, either on sea or land, but one whom I had thought the 'inimitable' Dr Livingstone. It is true that this latter personage, with the true modesty of greatness, says that he is *but* a man. I can only reply, that to be a man after the fashion of the heroic doctor and our Lancashire incumbent, is to be one in no ordinary sense of the term. This paper may fall under the observation of more than one before whom a professional career, no matter of what sort, is just opening out, and whose success must depend mainly upon his courage, activity, integrity of heart and purpose, and self-reliance. Let such a one read over at his leisure, again and again, the details given above; let him observe how much may be done by determining that it *shall* be done, and by the force of an indomitable will; let him understand the value of time well laid out and carefully divided; and although he may very naturally despair of equaling the very extraordinary achievements of this striking exemplar, he will attain all the more for studying and aiming at a really high standard of excellence.

It must be allowed that a clergyman's life admits of a variation in employment which cannot be obtained in other professions. The example is, therefore, chiefly valuable to the clerical brethren of the incumbent, who can, like him, vary the *modus operandi* at pleasure, provided that within a certain time a required result be produced.

The principle, however, which may be educed from a consideration of this remarkable case is one of the utmost value, and of universal application. As such, I heartily commend it to the careful study and conscientious imitation of my younger readers, whose characters and professional habits may still be in a great measure unformed, and who may be on that account within reach of its salutary influence. If we cannot do all we *would*, let us determine to do all we *can*.

D'A BORD DU MER.

FROM A FRENCH SONG.

ALONG the shore, along the shore

I see the wavelets meeting,

But thee I see—ah, nevermore,

For all my wild heart's beating.

The little wavelets come and go;

The sea of life ebbs to and fro,

Advancing and retreating:

But from the shore, the steadfast shore,

The sea is parted never:

And mine I hold thee evermore

For ever and for ever.

Along the shore, along the shore

I hear the waves resounding,

But thou wilt cross them nevermore

For all my wild heart's bounding.

The moon comes out above the tide,

And quiets all the waters wide

Her pathway bright surrounding:

As on the shore, the dreary shore,

I walk with vain endeavour;

I have thy love's light evermore,

For ever and for ever.

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